

Message Text

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ACTION AF-08

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 INRE-00 PM-04

NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 DODE-00 ACDA-07 CIAE-00 INR-07

NSAE-00 /061 W

-----151421Z 039906 /43

O R 151255Z MAR 77

FM AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2321

INFO AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L KINSHASA 2287

DELIVER OPENING OF BUSINESS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFORN MPS MASS BE FR CG

SUBJ: BRUSSELS VIEW OF SITUATION IN SHABA

REF: BRUSSELS 2452

1. BRUSSELS VIEW OF WHAT IS GOING ON HERE IS DISTURBING IN SEVERAL RESPECTS. IT SEEMS TO REFLECT BELGIAN FONMIN BELIEF:

(A) THAT INVADERS ARE SIMPLY EX KATANGAN GENDARMES WITH LIMITED AIMS IN LUNDA TERRITORY;

(B) THAT MOBUTU HAS YET TO FIGHT BACK AND IS EXAGGERATING DANGER TO ACHIEVE LONG-RANGE ARMAMENT GOALS.

2. OUR VIEW -- AND THAT OF LOCAL BELGIAN MILITARY AND EMBASSY IS THAT THE INVADING FORCES, WHICH CERTAINLY INCLUDE EX-KATANGAN GENDARMES BUT WHICH MAY ALSO INCLUDE ANGOLANS, CUBANS AND/OR MERCENARIES, IS WELL ORGANIZED, WITH GOALS THAT MAY GO FAR BEYOND MERELY A CROSS-BORDER RAID OR OCCUPYING A PORTION OF LUNDA TERRITORY. THE FACT THAT THE INVADERS HAVE MOVED
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SLOWLY DURING THE FIRST SIX DAYS SUGGESTS TO US-- NOT THAT IT IS A LOCAL OPERATION WITH LIMITED AIMS -- BUT RATHER A CAREFULLY PLANNED ATTACK WHICH MAY ULTIMATELY BE AIMED AT KOLWEZI, LUBUMBASHI AND PERHAPS KAMINA.

3. FROM WHAT WE CAN MAKE OUT OF REPORTS FROM KAPANGA AND SANDOA, THE ACTIVITY IN THAT SECTOR INDEED SEEMS TO BE OF A

MINIMAL NATURE DESIGNED TO USE EX-KATANGAN GENDARMES FROM THE AREA TO TAKE OVER AND HOLD A NORTHERN FLANK. EASILY DONE SINCE THERE ARE NO FAZ TROOPS IN AREA AND IT IS HIGHLY IMPOSSIBLE TO GET THEM THERE IN SUFFICIENT NUMBERS WITH ADEQUATE LOGISTICAL SUPPORT.

4. THE DILOLO AND KISENGE FRONT INVOLVES MUCH MORE SERIOUS IMPLICATIONS. THERE WE SEE THE INVADERS FIRST ESTABLISHING BASE AREAS WITH SECURE SUPPLY LINES RUNNING BACK INTO ANGOLA WHENCE THEY CAN MOVE FORWARD, INCLUDING DOWN THE DILOLO, KOLWEZI, LUBUMBASHI ROAD. KISENGE MAY BE PARTICULARLY INSTRUCTIVE IN THIS REGARD. FIRST THE BASE WAS ESTABLISHED AND WHILE SUPPLY LINES WERE BEING SET UP, THE INVADERS ESTABLISHED A GOOD DEFENSE PERIMETER ON THE LULUA RIVER AND BETWEEN MOLONGA/DIVUMA AND KISENGE. THEY HELD AND REPULSED FAZ TROOPS FROM THAT LINE. AND THEN, WHEN THEY WERE SUFFICIENTLY SUPPLIED, THEY MOVED UP TO KASAJI. WE EXPECT THIS PATTERN TO CONTINUE AND POINT OUT THAT IT FOLLOWS THE MPLA/SOVIET/CUBAN PLAN OF ATTACK DURING THE ANGOLAN WAR.

5. AS FOR THE FAZ RESPONSE, WE TRUST THAT EVERYONE IS AWARE THAT THE OPERATIONAL AREA IS 800 MILES FROM KINSHASA, AND THAT THE FAZ TROOPS ARE FAR FROM THE DISCIPLINED FORCES REPRESENTED BY THE INVADERS. TRUE, MOBUTU'S FIRST REACTION WAS TO ASK FOR THE MOON IN TERMS OF MILITARY ASSISTANCE FROM HIS WESTERN FRIENDS, BUT WHEN TOLD TO BE REALISTIC -- HE WAS, AT LEAST IN OUR CASE.

6. LASTLY, AND IN THE LIGHT OF WASHINGTON'S REFUSAL TO PUT SMALL LOGISTICS TEAMS INTO KAMINA, THE BELGIAN REFUSAL TO USE SUPPORT PERSONNEL HAS SERIOUS IMPLICATIONS. IF WE, THE FRENCH AND BELGIANS BRING OUR ASSISTANCE INTO KINSHASA AND LEAVE TO CONFIDENTIAL

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FAZ TOTAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR RECEIPT/DISTRIBUTION INTO SHABA, THE SUPPLY OPERATION RISKS FALLING INTO DISARRAY. THE BELGIANS ARE BEST PLACED TO PUT A SMALL LOGISTICS TEAM INTO KAMINA, KOLWEZI AND LUBUMBASHI AND WE SHOULD ENCOURAGE THEM TO DO SO.

7. DEPARTMENT WILL UNDERSTAND THAT ABOVE VIEWS REPRESENT OUR BEST JUDGMENT AT THIS TIME AND ARE OF COURSE SUBJECT TO CHANGE PENDING DEVELOPMENTS. THE MAIN POINT IS THAT THE SITUATION IN SHABA AS WE PERCEIVE IT TODAY IS POTENTIALLY MUCH MORE SERIOUS THAN BRUSSELS SEEMS TO BELIEVE. THE BELGIAN AMBASSADOR HERE FULLY SHARES OUR VIEW.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: REPORTS, BORDER INCIDENTS, UNCONVENTIONAL WARFARE
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Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977KINSHA02287
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
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From: KINSHASA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
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Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770359/aaaabzvg.tel
Line Count: 109
Litigation Code IDs:
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Litigation History:
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Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 77 BRUSSELS 2452
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 23-Nov-2004 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3106464
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: BRUSSELS VIEW OF SITUATION IN SHABA
TAGS: PFOR, MOPS, MASS, BE, FR, CG
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/e129f8b7-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009